

Crossbow Safety Tips

Virginia is among a growing number of states that have allowed all hunters the opportunity to use a crossbow for deer hunting. Previously reserved for handicapped individuals, DGIF now allows all hunters to use a crossbow during archery season. It has become the fastest growing new hunting option. While crossbows are considered in the same regulations that apply to archery equipment, there are several key differences to handling a crossbow safely. If you hunt from a treestand using a crossbow, you need to be aware of these safety guidelines.

Never dry fire a crossbow. Carry a target point arrow (bolt) with you to uncock your crossbow at the end of your hunting for the day. You should shoot it into the ground or a soft tree stump. Some folks carry a crossbow target in their vehicle so they can place it on the ground and then discharge the arrow.

Always keep your fingers below the level of the rail. Because a crossbow is shot like a rifle, many folks have the habit of placing their fingers high on the forward hand guard. This habit can

cause a serious injury to your hands when the string is released.

Cock your crossbow while on the ground before you climb into your treestand. If you attempt to cock your crossbow while in your stand using your foot, you could easily lose your balance and fall. Although a risky maneuver, if it is necessary to cock your crossbow in the treestand, always use a ratchet device.

Always be mindful of the proximity of the bow limbs in relationship to the tree and parts of the treestand. There is enough force in the limbs to knock a hunter to the ground if the bow limbs come in contact with the tree or stand. This is another reason why it is so important that hunters wear a full body harness when hunting from treestands.

Always use a haul line to raise and lower your crossbow into the treestand. Raise and lower crossbows with the stock up and the bow pointed down and with the safety on. Never raise or lower a crossbow with an arrow loaded on the rail. Once you are secured in the treestand only then should you load your crossbow.

Always use the manufacturer's recommended arrow weights and specifications. Be sure and practice **before the season** using your crossbow in field situations, and treestands keeping in mind the safety tips noted above.

Know the limitations of the crossbow.

Always make sure your crossbow is sighted in before hunting season.

Always use a full body harness whenever hunting from an elevated stand.

Practice, practice, practice...

Know your target and beyond.

HARNESSE UP

BEFORE YOU CLIMB UP



When using a crossbow, always be sure the bow limbs are clear of the tree or parts of the treestand. There is enough force in the limbs to knock a hunter to the ground if the bow limbs come in contact with the tree or stand. This is another reason it is so important to wear a full body harness when hunting from treestands. Photo by Bruce Hartman, VDGIF Hunter Education Instructor Treestand Safety team.



Virginia Department of Game and
Inland Fisheries
P. O. Box 11104, 4010 West Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23230-1104
(804) 367-1000



The Department of Game and Inland Fisheries shall afford to all persons an equal access to Department Programs and facilities without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, disability, sex or age. If you believe that you have been discriminated against in any program activity or facility, please write to: The Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, 4010 West Broad Street, P. O. Box 11104, Richmond, VA 23230.

The Virginia Department
of Game & Inland Fisheries
Presents:

CROSSBOW SAFETY

